

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MEXICO 11708 191748Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SSO-00  
INRE-00 ICAE-00 /044 W  
-----098335 191754Z /44

O 182236Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1464

UNCLAS MEXICO 11708

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: MX, SWEL  
SUBJECT: TRAFFIC DISASTER ON QUERETERO HIGHWAY

REF: BITTNER-LIBERA TELCONS OF JULY 18

1. ACCIDENT OCCURRED APPROXIMATELY 2400 HOURS, SATURDAY JULY 15, ON THE QUERETERO HIGHWAY, ABOUT 85 KILOMETERS NORTH OF MEXICO CITY. TO EMBASSY'S BEST KNOWLEDGE, NO AMCITS INVOLVED. ACCIDENT OCCURRED WHEN TRACTOR-TRAILOR TRUCK CARRYING LIQUID PROPANE GAS EXPLODED. ALSO INVOLVED WERE THREE PASSENGER BUSES AND TWO CARGO VEHICLES. THE OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL IS PRESENTLY TWELVE BUT COULD GO MUCH HIGHER. INJURED WERE AT LEAST 150. A NUMBER OF THE BADLY BURNED ARE NOT EXPECTED TO LIVE. DAMAGES ESTIMATED AT TEN MILLION PESOS (FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS).  
END SUMMARY.

2. TRACTOR INVOLVED WAS A 1973 KENWORTH, MOTOR NO. 10320090, LICENSE PLATE G9065-SPF. TRAILOR WAS A 1973 TATISA (MEXICAN MANUFACTURE) WITH TOTAL CAPACITY OF 40,000 LITRES. AT THE TIME OF ACCIDENT, IT WAS BELIEVED TO BE CARRYING 20,000 LITRES OF LIQUID PROPANE GAS.  
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MEXICO 11708 191748Z

TRACTOR-TRAILOR WAS TRAVLING NORTH, PROBABLY AT ABOUT 70 KPH ON AN UPHILL GRADIENT.

3. AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION ABOUT EXACT DETAILS OF ACCIDENT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. THREE VERSIONS ARE PRESENTLY CIRCULATING. FIRST IS THAT THE TRACTOR-TRAILOR HIT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, CAUSING IT TO OVERTURN,

OPENING UP A LEAK AND LEADING TO THE EXPLOSION. A SECOND VERSION IS THAT THE VEHICLE WAS ALREADY LEAKING GAS AND THE PROXIMITY OF THE FOLLOWING VEHICLES CAUSED THE PRE-LIMINARY FLAMES AND THE RESULTANT EXPLOSION. A FINAL VERSION IS THAT THE DRIVER WAS ACCELERATING SUCH ON THE DOWNHILL GRADIENT THAT HE LOST CONTROL, OVERTURNING THE TRUCK WHICH CAUSED THE EXPLOSION.

4. ABOVE INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS AND INTERVIEW WITH OFFICIAL OF TOWN NEAR ACCIDENT SITE. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO OBTAIN AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION REGARDING ACCIDENT AS WELL AS ASCERTAIN WHETHER MEXICANS WILL PERMIT OFFICIAL INVESTIGATING TEAM FROM NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY ORGANIZATION. LUCEY

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978MEXICO11708  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780296-0833  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** MEXICO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780748/aaaabolv.tel  
**Line Count:** 76  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** db315171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 mar 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** N/A  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1972223  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** TRAFFIC DISASTER ON QUERETERO HIGHWAY  
**TAGS:** SWEL, ELTN, MX  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/db315171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014